

The President and the Public



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POL 106: The Presidency

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Outline



- I. Baum: “Talking the Vote: Why Presidential Candidates Hit the Talk Show Circuit.” (2005)
- II. Canes-Wrone and Shotts: “The Conditional Nature of Presidential Responsiveness to Public Opinion.” (2004)
- III. Cohen: “If the News is So Bad, Why Are the Presidential Polls So High?” (2004)

Baum: “Talking The Vote”



- What question is Baum seeking to address?
- Why talk shows?
- What is the significance?
- What are the data?

Baum: “Talking The Vote”



- What are Baum’s hypotheses?
- Relative to traditional media, interviews on E-talk shows will...
 - H1: be less partisan
 - H2: be more favorable towards the subject
 - H3: have less emphasis on substantive issues

Baum: “Talking The Vote”

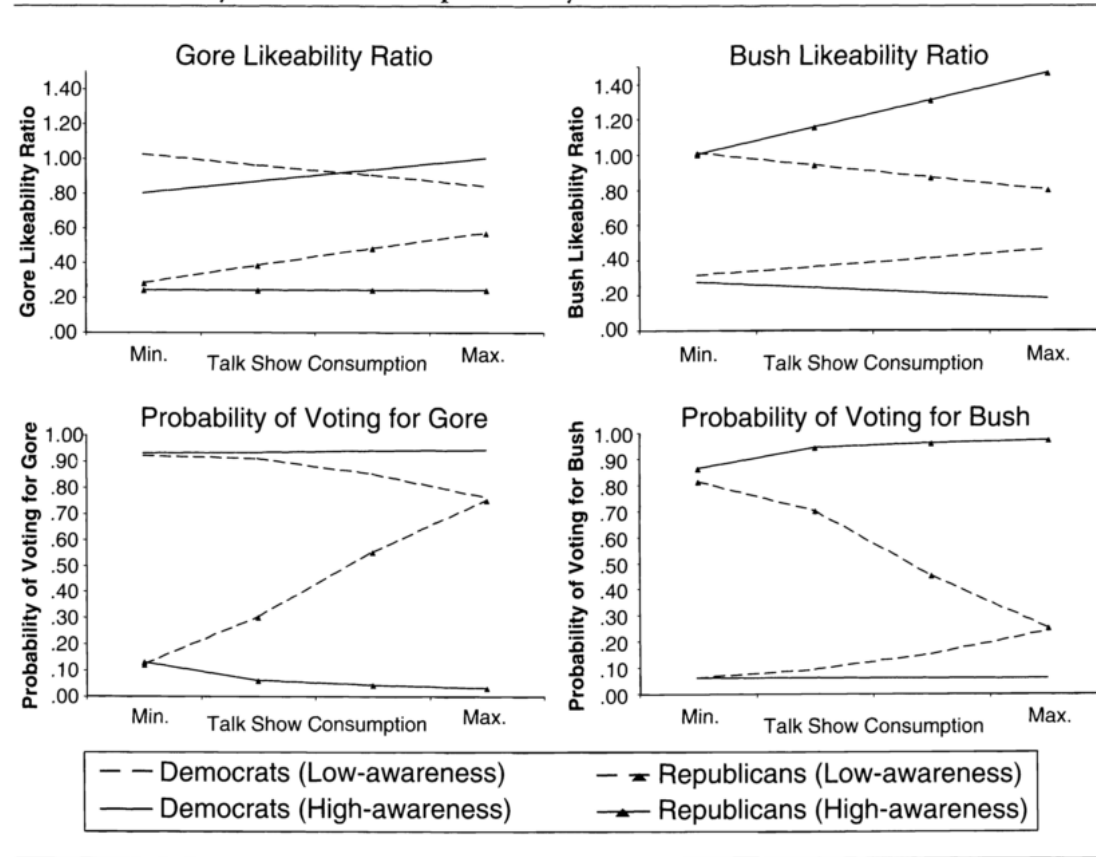


- Define Baum’s terms:
 - Political awareness
 - Likeability ratio
- What are Baum’s findings...

Baum: "Talking The Vote"



FIGURE 1 Likeability Ratio* and Probability of Voting for Gore or Bush, as Political Awareness and Daytime Talk Show Exposure Vary



*Plotted values represent linear transformations of dependent variable (not bounded between zero and one).

Baum: “Talking The Vote”



- Do you buy Baum’s model? Why or why not?
- How might you critique Baum’s research design?
- If you were to replicate this design today, would you do it any differently?
- Can we connect this article to Vavreck and Erikson?

Canes-Wrone & Shotts



- What question are the authors seeking to address?
- What is the significance?
- What are the data? What's the timespan?

Canes-Wrone & Shotts



- Define the authors' key terms:
 - Policy Congruence
 - Popularity
 - President's ideological congruence
- The data....

Canes-Wrone & Shotts



TABLE 1 Policy Congruence by Issue

Issue	% Congruence (# Obs.)
Crime	92 (25)
Defense	32 (25)
Education	57 (23)
Environment	41 (22)
Foreign Aid	32 (22)
Ground Transportation	33 (21)
Health	92 (25)
Parks	15 (13)
Social Security	100 (13)
Space	9 (22)
Welfare	50 (24)
Total, All Observations	51 (235)
Total, Ideological Observations	71 (49)

TABLE 2 Policy Congruence by President

President	% Congruence, All Obs.	% Congruence, Ideological Obs.
Nixon	35	50
Ford	56	100
Carter	60	71
Reagan	43	88
G.H.W. Bush	55	63
Clinton	55	50

Canes-Wrone & Shotts



- The authors have three hypotheses...

Canes-Wrone & Shotts



FIGURE 1 Monotonic Popularity Hypothesis

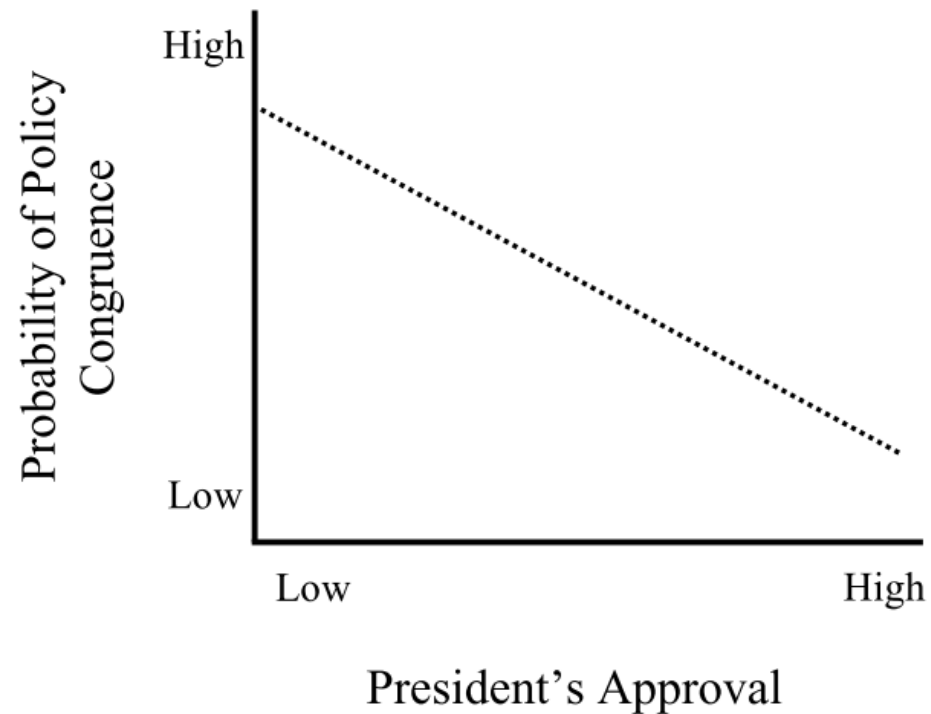
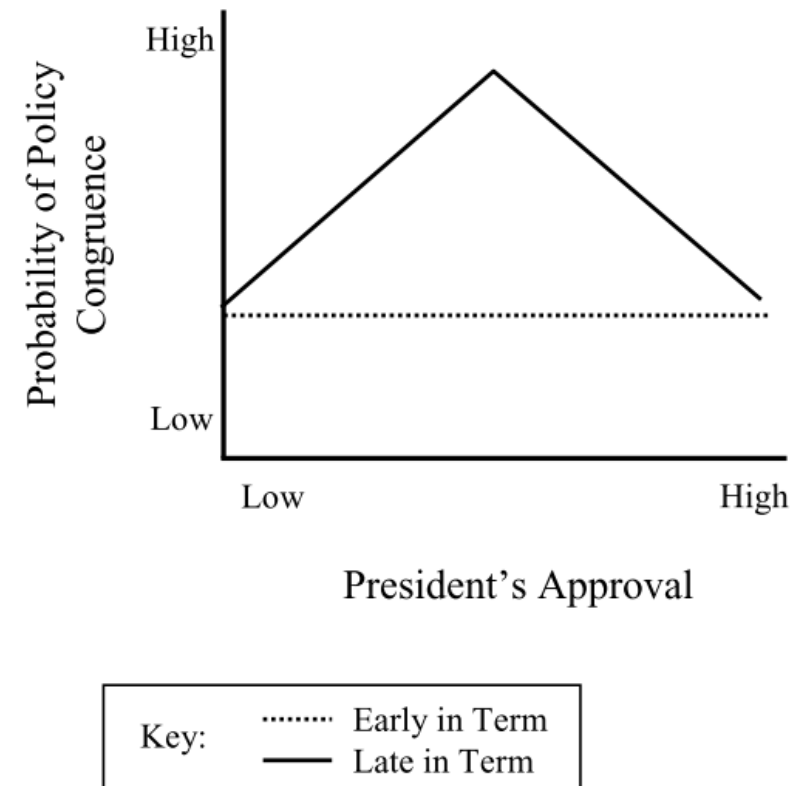


FIGURE 2 CHS Popularity Hypothesis



Canes-Wrone & Shotts



Canes-Wrone & Shotts



Canes-Wrone & Shotts



- What are the authors' findings?
- Is this good news or bad for American democracy?
- What do they find regarding second-term presidents?
- Critiques and comments?

Cohen: Bad News, High Polls



- What is Cohen's research puzzle?
- What is his theory?
- What is the significance?
- What are the data?

Cohen: Bad News, High Polls

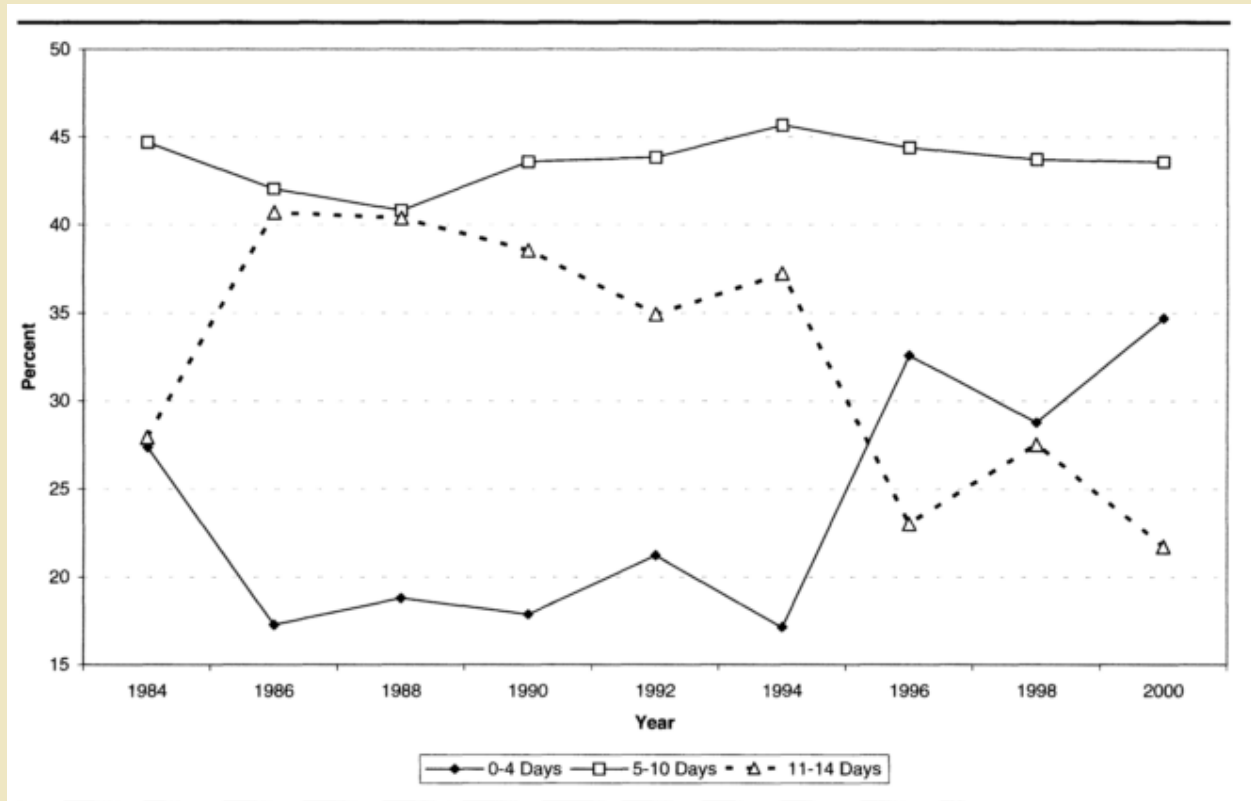


FIGURE 7. Trends in Newspaper and Television Use in the Past Week, 1984-2000.

Source: ANES, 1984-2000. Each time point represents the percentage of individuals whose combined use of television and newspapers during the past week totaled either 1 to 4 days (light media news consumers), 5 to 10 days (moderate media news consumers), or 11 to 14 days (heavy media news consumers).

Cohen: Bad News, High Polls

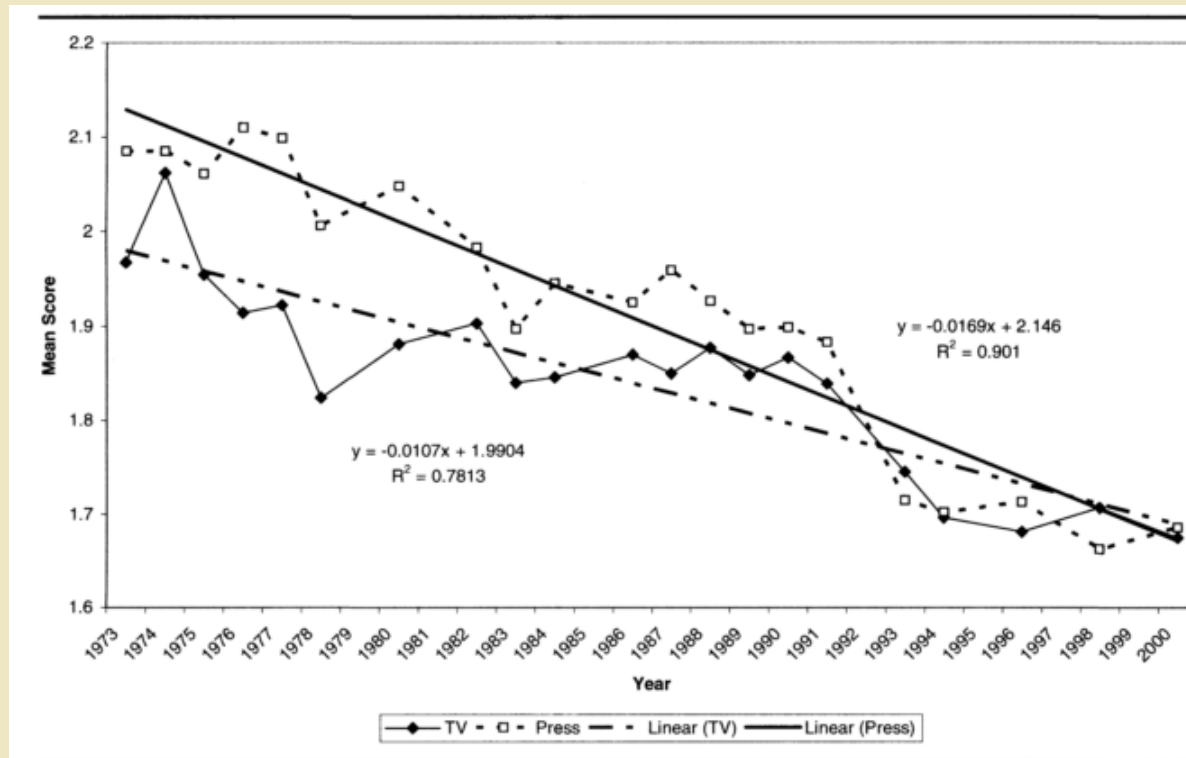


FIGURE 9. Confidence in the Press and Television, GSS, 1973-2000.

Source: GSS, 1972-2000. Question: "I am going to name some institutions in this country. As far as the people running these institutions are concerned, would you say you have a great deal confidence, only some confidence, or hardly any confidence at all in them? Press. TV." The figure is constructed by coding "great deal" = 3, "only some" = 2, and "hardly any" = 1, and then taking the average for each year.

Cohen: Bad News, High Polls



- What are his findings?
 - Media has decentralized and become more competitive
 - Reporting is more negative overall
 - The public consumes less news from traditional outlets
 - Public trust in news media has declined

Cohen: Bad News, High Polls



The 'nasty effect,' and why Donald Trump supporters mistrust the media

Partisanship, distrust of media fuel Trump claim of 9/11 celebrations, poll finds

Why Hating the Media Could Make the Difference in November

The winning candidate may be the one who most successfully stirs the public's mistrust of journalists and journalism.

Cohen: Bad News, High Polls



- What are the implications?
- Is the current news environment an unqualified plus for presidents?
- How has “going public” changed? Why?
- Comments? Critiques?

For Next Time...



- Cohen: “From the Fabulous Baker Boys to the Master of Disaster: The White House Chief of Staff in the Reagan and G. H. W. Bush Administrations.” (2002)
- Pfiffner: “The Contemporary Presidency: Decision Making in the Bush White House.” (2009)
- Pfiffner: “Decision Making in the Obama White House.” (2011)
- Come ready to compare/contrast the Pfiffner articles!